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THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF THE TAO OF SOUTHERN NYASALAND[1]

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I. OUTLINE OF THE GENERAL CULTURAL BACKGROUND

[1] I have been helped and stimulated in the preparation of this paper by my colleagues of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, Dr. E. Colson and Mr. J. A. Barnes and by the staff of the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford, Prof. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Dr. M. Fortes and Dr. Max Gluckman. I am especially indebted to Dr. Max Gluckman who was Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute when I joined it, and who gave much of his time to criticizing and developing the presentation of this paper.

[2] Mainly Yao, Nguru and Mbunga. The proportions are given in Table I and their relations briefly discussed later (p. 10). In general their cultural backgrounds are similar and what I have said of the Yao is true of the others.

[3] "The Outline of the Social Organization of the Yao of Southern Nyasaland" in Rhodes-Livingstone Papers of British Central Africa, ed. E. Colson, (London: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[4] The position of the village headman in the internal structure of Yao villages is more fully described in my contribution to the symposium, "The Village Headman in British Central Africa" (with M. Gluckman and J. A. Barnes, *Africa*, VIII, January 1949).

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(1) The people with whom this paper is concerned[1] occupy that part of Nyasaland between the Chiholo Range in the South; Mount Mangoche in the North; the Shire River to the West; and the Portuguese East African border to the East. This area is represented on the accompanying diagrammatic map. A more detailed description of the general social organization of the Yao in this area, and of their history and general cultural background is to be published shortly.[2] At
(3) this point it is sufficient to say that the Yao are semi-subsistence cultivators living in village settlements ranging from a few huts to sixty or more, with an average of about twelve. This represents say a population average of about 80 per village but ranging from 15 to over 200.
(5) Those village settlements are inhabited by groups
(6) of kinsmen. In general there is a matrilineal core
(7) of kinsmen of whom the village headman, who
(8) has the same name as the village, is one. In some more complex villages there are subsidiary matrilineages related to the matrilineal core agnatically

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through one or other incumbent of the position of village headman.[4] Succession to posts of authority, including that of the chief, is matrilineal. Ideally the succession should pass to the first-born son of a man's eldest sister, but this is not always followed, for the personal qualities of the successor are most important.

The total African population of the area studied is 65,000. There are one or two Indian traders and two Europeans permanently resident in the area. One European is a missionary in the north-east corner and the other an Agricultural officer in the north centre of the area. Part of the area is administered by the District Commissioner, Zomba, and part by District Commissioner, Fort Johnston, and these officers tour the districts under their jurisdiction. Occasionally other White officials and labour recruiters appear, but in the main, Whites are not often seen in this area. The one road traversing it is usually impassable for a part of the rainy season.

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II. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE Before the Whites Came

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It is difficult to picture what the political organization of the Yao was like before the Whites came into the area, but informants—especially the old men—do describe the conditions that existed in the early days, and in addition to this, there are some useful reports in Duff Macdonald's book[1] which was written before European influence was strongly felt.

Informants describe the movements of the Yao into Nyasaland in terms of small family groups under the leadership of a male matrilineal relative.[2] These leaders bear the same names as certain of the village headmen to-day, and the present village headmen claim to be their matrilineal descendants. Among the kin-group leaders were such outstanding personalities as Kawinga, Liwonde and Nkata.[3] These men were military and commercial leaders and much of their prestige derived from their prowess in trade and war, pursuits which in those days were intimately interdependent. People nowadays describe the chiefs as possessing many slaves, guns and gunpowder and having great "strength". In the history of the chiefs Nkata, Liwonde and Kawinga the pattern of conquest is similar. A group of village headmen under each chief moved into Nyasaland to settle either by treaty as Nkata who settled with a clan-relative among the indigenous Nyanja, or by direct conquest as Kawinga. After settling down they started sending out forces to subdue local chiefs until the boundary of the territory of some other powerful chief, usually another Yao, was reached. When this happened a definite territory was agreed upon by the two chiefs. Within this territory the population was increased by immigration from other areas or by slavery. Village headmen moved from a less to a more powerful chief because of the security he offered them. They were said to "seize the leg"

II. The Political Structure
BEFORE THE WHITES CAME

173 643 167 (*kukasuula lukongolo*), i.e. to surrender to the chief in the area. Also the chief sent out expeditions to capture slaves or he purchased slaves with the cloth and beads he had exchanged for ivory at the East coast.

643 421 Within his territory certain privileges and rights were held by the chief and he had certain religious duties to perform in which the unity of the people in the territory was expressed. In general the chief had rights over any ivory either found or hunted in his territory. If a dead elephant were found the tusks belonged to the chief, though he usually rewarded the finder with cloth. If a man killed an elephant the tusk that lay on [224] the ground belonged to the chief while the other belonged to the killer. The killer's tusk was in- [439] cluded in the chief's caravan to the coast and its value paid in cloth to the killer when the caravan returned.

643 657 The chief was also entitled to an annual tribute of food and beer from all villages in his area, but this was used to entertain visitors who came to the court-village.

643 782 The chief's religious duties lay mainly in propitiating the spirits of his ancestors on occasions when the community at-large, in contrast to the chief's own private affairs, was either threatened or directly affected. The most obvious occasion was immediately before the rains came when flour was poured on the tree shrine and the spirits of the ancestors asked for good rains. Later when the rains were over a similar sacrifice was made asking for a good harvest. Sacrifices to the ancestors were also made on two other public occasions. They were made when some calamity had occurred or was believed to be impending. A run of unsuccessful campaigns induced Cingwalugwalu, a son of the Yao chief Mponda near Fort Johnston, to ask his father's father's brother to make sacri-

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

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[illegible] Dora MacDonald, *Africans of the Heart of Northern Africa*, (London : 1907).

[illegible] The matrilineal male leader is called *nyanu ukwalu* (=mother of the sorority group) the village headman *nyanu mwai* (=mother of the village) and the chief *nyanu ulimba* (=mother of the land). The word *nyanu* could be translated as *owner* but see note p. 140. Important headmen and chiefs are both addressed as by the term *mwanje*.

[illegible] The honorific *Ci* is dropped from all Yao proper names mentioned in this paper.

643 782 fice to the ancestors. The other public occasion was at initiation ceremonies. A successful initiation, i.e. one in which the initiates were not beset by misfortune, depended upon the goodwill of the ancestors of the chief. Initiates therefore gathered at the chief's court-village before the initiation, when the sanction of the spirits was asked and the initiates severally blessed. After this they scattered to the bush-schools near their villages only to return when initiation was completed and the chief received them into tribal society.

643 769 The people who had submitted themselves, willingly or unwillingly, to the rule of a chief, in turn expected certain services from him. He provided them, as we saw, with mystical protection through his ancestors. On a more pragmatic plane he was able to arm and co-ordinate military forces thereby giving his people protection from attack. Within his area of rule he was a common person of final appeal in the regulation of relationships of his subjects.

In these various ways, by propitiating his ancestor's spirits on behalf of his subjects, by settling differences between subjects, by co-ordinating defence and in fact by being a unique personality in the area, the chief became the symbol of unity of his tribal group. The symbolism was clearly noticeable on the death of a chief when a short period of social disorganization called *cipinimbe* followed. The members of the chief's village were allowed to pillage and to commit rape and other criminal acts without suffering legal action. The demise of the symbol of unity was followed by a period of disunity before the appointment of a successor restored the *status quo*.

622 [769] At the same time much of what has been said about the chief was true also of important village headmen. Village headmen also made sacrifices to their ancestors but only in domestic or village affairs. They too built up their prestige by slaving. Many villages in Southern Nyasaland to-day

622 are composed of the descendants of slave-wives of village headmen in days past. Like the village
643 headmen the chief was considered to be in danger
622 from contact with death. He could not attend the funeral of commoners, he could not eat the
761 chicken which was brought to him at the announcement of the death of a commoner (for a village
[153] headmen) or subject (of a chief). Should he do so he would suffer from a disease called *ndaka*. Also village headmen, like the chief were supposed to be well versed in medicine and were regarded with some awe on this account. The chief and the village headmen were distinguished from the commoners in these ways.

643 But, the chief himself was a village headman.
622 He had to administer the affairs of his family group and slaves as had other village headmen.
692 He was involved in the struggle for power going on around him because he was not lifted above these secular struggles as was, for example, the Zulu King.[1] Duff MacDonald records for example: "In a dispute between the inhabitants of different villages, the respective headmen represent their own subjects, and the chief is appealed to. All his decisions are final. Still the chief may otherwise have less influence than a powerful headman, and we have known cases where he simply contented himself with grumbling when his headman acted contrary to his desire; and in many criminal trials he is eclipsed by the sorcerers and pounders of poison."[2]
643 Again MacDonald records how the chief tried
622 to entice subjects away from a village headman at a trial by pointing out that the village headman had a poor character and was unsuitable to look after people.[2] While there seems to have been some evidence that a number of village headmen under a chief acted jointly in the face of a common danger, but apparently with no powerful military organization. Village headmen seem to have been almost entirely autonomous in their actions, slave-raiding on their own, even raiding villages who paid tribute to the same chief as they did.

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7
[P.143C]

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[1] See MAX GLUCKMAN, "The Kingdom of the Zulu of South Africa" in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard ed., *African Political Systems*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 28 *et seq.* The Zulu king had no immediate subjects but concentrated the military regiments about him so that he could use these to destroy his rivals.
[2] DUFF MACDONALD (1882), Vol. I, p. 155.

643 There is little doubt that village headmen did
622 wax in power and finally break away to form the
nucleus of a chiefdom of their own. The chief
578 that a headman had left could do little to regain
his lost subject and he had to rule not by tyranny
but by tact. Duff MacDonald, for instance,
records: "When a quarrel arises between the
chief of the country and an important headman
the latter may rebel and found a new kingdom,
thus depriving the old chief perhaps of one-
third of the villages in his dominion". [1] Nkanda
is an example. "Nkanda of Cherasulo was at
first a headmen of Kumpama's but rebelled
and lives on the Southern side of that mountain
an easy day's march from Blantyre." [2]

643 The leader was known, and is still known
to-day, by the term *anyene cilambo*. This might be
translated as "owner of the country" but the
term "owner" in this context would be a mis-
translation. I prefer to translate this phrase as:
"The person with whom a certain area is identi-
fied". [3] Hence when a man says, as the Yao
do: "I come from Kawinga's", he does not mean
that the land is owned by Kawinga, but that
Kawinga is the most important man in that area.
645 Among the village headmen in the area under a
631 particular leader there were a number of trusted
692 village headmen called *akhuu*, which term I
622 have translated as "councillors". These councillors
had special duties to perform. They were in
the nature of governors in outer areas and each
had a number of other villages under his jurisdic-
tion. By this I mean that these villages were sup-
posed to take certain cases for trial to him and to
approach the leader through him. The council-
lors were supposed to visit the village of the chief
each morning and to report anything untoward.
The councillors also had the important duty of
advising the chief, particularly in connexion
with raiding of neighbouring tribes. Councillors
also arbitrated in the domestic affairs of the chief
and in the all too frequent conflicts between the
Chief, his sister's sons and his younger
brothers.

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chief, his sister's sons and his younger brothers.

Besides the councillors, there were a number of officials known as *mapungu* (sing. *lipungu*), which term I translate as court assessor. These officials have often been confused with the councillors, though they were a completely different set of officials. They were not necessarily village headmen though councillors were always so. Also the position of the court assessors, unlike that of the councillors, was not hereditary. Court assessors were chosen because of their wisdom and debating ability and often slaves were appointed. Councillors were chosen because of their general status in the community and once chosen tended to be succeeded by the heir, who for all intents and purposes, socially replaced his predecessor. The court assessors lived at the court of the chief and they were the correct channel of approach to him. No one could approach the chief without at first approaching a court assessor and reporting his business. The assessor's more important duty, however, was the sifting of evidence in cases in which the chief was arbitrating. The court assessor then recounted this evidence to the chief who delivered his opinion and awarded compensation.

In general the picture that we have of the political organization of the Yao before the Whites came, is that of a number of leaders of kinship groups, who by acquiring sufficient dependants and slaves were able to maintain a certain level of power. Certain groups of them were under the power of more influential leaders (the chiefs) who usually had sufficient resources to send trading caravans down to the coast, which in turn maintained his power over his neighbours. In this loose po. tical organization the importance of being able to control dependants was cardinal and the adage "a chief without people is nothing" (*mcilambo napa ngamakola tlando, ngamanwa mcilambo!*) sums up the situation pithily.

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7
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[1] Dow MacDonald (1882), Vol. I, p. 157. [2] Dow MacDonald (1882), Vol. I, p. 32.
[3] Cf. G. Wagner, "The Political Organization of the Bantu of Kavirondo" in M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard ed., *African Political Systems*, at p. 214: "The Logoli term *omwene* refers both to 'ownership' of objects and of persons. It differs of course, from our concept of ownership in several respects. Thus the *omwene* (owner) of a person is the one who has not only the foremost rights over him but also the foremost obligations towards him."

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III. THE ENTRY Of The Whites

175 797 648 The first settlements in Nyasaland were in the Shire Highlands where a Church of Scotland Mission was built in 1876. In 1878 the African Lakes Company was founded to take over the trading activities of the Mission. As the White population grew the necessity for some non-missionary organization to regulate the relationships between Africans and the growing body of White settlers, who now included planters and traders as well as missionaries, became more and more pressing. Eventually in 1883 a British Consul was appointed. In 1891 to meet the activities of the Portuguese, a Protectorate was established and the military measures that had been proceeding against the slave traders were now intensified.

175 648 The military police used by the British authorities had arms which the Yao could not withstand, and even the most successful of Yao military groups was soon destroyed. Breech-loading rifles outshot the Yao's muzzle-loading guns and cannon were also used by the British in some actions. The British had a force of Sikhs well-trained in military manoeuvres. Even the previously impregnable Mount Cikala, so long held by Kawinga and his forces, was successfully assaulted. The superior arms of the British left an indelible impression on the Yao who had long conducted successful military campaigns, and in due course these arms came to be identified with the force of the value system of the Whites. One of the more immediate results of the success of White armaments was that certain Yao chiefs seized the initiative and used the British forces as a tool in their own political machinations. The history of the rise of Kalembo, although his country is outside the area of study of this paper, is interesting in this respect. Before the Whites came Kalembo, younger brother of Msamala, who was the father of the notorious Mponda, was an insignificant character. Just before the

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III. The Entry OF THE WHITES

175 British started actively to pacify the country, the
648 sons of Mponda were at war with each other and Cingwalungwalu was on the way to dominating the whole of the west of the Shire River bank above the Murchison falls. After the British had demonstrated their efficiency by a few attacks on some of Nkata's forces, Kalembo approached the British leader and complained of the war in his territory. The British forces accordingly attacked and destroyed Cingwalungwalu's forces thereby leaving the way open for Kalembo to establish himself under the British wing as an important chief of the west bank of Lake Malombe. Amongst the chieftancies studied in this paper there appeared to have been no direct use of the British military forces in internal politics.[1] The Whites in this way immediately became a factor in tribal political organization. First of all some chiefs endeavoured to use the military force of the Whites directly in their tribal politics. Later on as military actions came to an end the power of the Whites continued to be tapped by chiefs and other personalities in the political structure in order to manipulate the tribal political set-up to their own advantage. In the main the power of the British Administration though still an active agent in tribal politics is now present as an abstract and invisible but nonetheless potent force. How this is done to-day I hope to be able to show by an analysis of the interaction of chiefs, African civil servants and village headmen.

101 As a foundation to this view of Yao politics,
175 the detailed history of the three chieftains Ka-
619 winga, Liwonde and Nyambi is illuminating.
643 Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi all belong to the same division of the Yao tribe, i.e. Macinga. There are about nine such divisions but only four are to be found in Nyasaland. The Acisi live near the Portuguese East African border in the Fort Johnston area (Katuli's area) and the

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[1] There is some evidence that Mpona the son of Liwonde may have helped the British forces to subdue a neighbouring chief, Cumba the son of Kawinga.

101 Amasinings in the Makanjila area of Fort Johns-
619 ton District, i.e. to the east of the south end of
175 the Lake near Fort Maguire. These two divisions
are insignificant when compared with the other
643 two divisions in Nyasaland. The third division
is the Mangoce Yao now settled around Blantyre,
while the last division, the Macinga, are settled
between Fort Johnston district and Zomba.
These divisions arose from a breaking up of the
Yao tribe which originally occupied the territory
between the Rovuma and Lujenda Rivers in what
is now Portuguese East Africa. These divisions
are not very significant to-day. Members of a
division recognize that they are more closely
related to each other than to the members of
another division, but this does not appear to
affect modern political life in any way.

619 The first Kawinga, Liwonde and Nkata [1]
175 all belonged to the Macinga division which had
settled near the tip of Lake Amaramba where it
551 empties into the Lujenda River. From this place
643 of origin, the groups associated with these early
leaders moved into Nyasaland. In addition to
belonging to the same division of the Yao tribe
the three leaders mentioned also had the same clan-
name, viz. ~~mabeme~~. [2] The term that I have trans-
lated as clan-name is the Yao word *fukuryo*,
which may also be translated as "kind" or "sort".
Thus, if one asks a man the "kind" or "sort"
of Yao he is, his answer may refer to the major
divisions as above, i.e. Macinga or Mangoce
or it may refer to the clan-name. Clan-names are
inherited matrilineally, but holders of the same
name are unable to trace their descent from
a common ancestor. People with the same clan-
[582] names formerly did not marry but this prohibi-
tion has fallen away. For the commoners the
clan-name seems to have lost most of its signi-
ficance but it is carefully remembered in the royal
lines and lines in which the rank of a village head-
man is passed down.

643 The present Kawinga and the present Liwonde
551 can trace their descent matrilineally from a com-
175

643 mon ancestress. The first Kawinga and the first
551 Liwonde were maternal brothers and to this day
175 Kawinga and Liwonde call each other "brother".
[601] Nyambi however was a sister's son of an early leader Mkumba who was the father of Nkata, and their clan-name was *amulan*. Nkata therefore called Nyambi "father". [3] Nkata was the first to move into Nyasaland and Mkumba and Nyambi followed afterwards. Later the Nkata name was dropped and an Arabic name Zarafi, corrupted to Jalasi, was substituted. Hence the present Jalasi calls the present Nyambi "father". Kawinga and Liwonde both call Nyambi *alamu*, or brother-in-law, it is said because one of the early Nyambi's married a woman who bore the clan-name of *amlwaw*.

643 The groups under Kawinga and Nkata entered
175 Nyasaland and gradually expanded until Jalasi,
648 as he became known, dominated the area around Mount Mangoce in the present Fort Johnston District, and Kawinga, safely enconced on Mount Cikala, dominated most of the area north of this point. Jalasi, Kawinga and Liwonde were heavily defeated by British forces in 1895–6 and driven out of British Territory. Later on they were allowed to return after they had been ordered to surrender and effectively disarmed. When they had returned, the chiefs were virtually ignored and as far as can be ascertained the effect of the British government was to destroy the power of the chiefs and substitute the system of British administration for theirs. Nevertheless, it is apparent from entries in the District Book that even though it were not the official policy, the administrating officers considered it important that the chiefs should maintain some power. Thus when Kawinga III died in August 1905 the District Book records: "There were two claimants to the succession, Kumkomba and Chiwalo. Their claims were really very equal and H. M. Commissioner (April 1906) called in Kumkomba and the most important headmen and decided the succession by their vote." The

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[1] The Nyambi chieftancy developed from the Nkata line as explained below.

[2] The clan names of the Yao unlike those of most other Central African tribes, appear not to refer to common objects of everyday life. I could not get a translation of *anakaw* and of most other clan-names.

[3] A man calls his father's sister's son *anisuani* (cross-cousin) but since this cross-cousin should in due course succeed to the (man's) father's name, he may also call his cross-cousin "father".

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643 175 648 report goes on to say that the newly elected chief Kumlomba "had been mad once and still has a weak looking face and is a weak man. He has no real influence with his people and is ruled by his young men's advice. He means well but does not act on his own ideas sufficiently."[1] This comment shows that even though the Administration may have acted on this occasion for the preservation of peace, to the Yao it seemed to be approving their indigenous institution in appointing the successor. Informants say that when Kawinga IV died in 1913 his successor Chiwalo, who was the unsuccessful claimant of the report in the District Book, was able to succeed to the name against some Yao opposition, because of his influence with the administration.

As early as 1903, only seven years after the last military action was taken against a Yao group, the position of the defeated chiefs in the new political structure was being considered. Thus the Report of the Protectorate 1903–1904 reads: "A somewhat difficult question for consideration is the extent of power which should be allowed to native chiefs. Before British influence was established a chief had unlimited powers of life and death, and was able to keep his people in order. He did so not by kindness, but through fear. At the present day, when chiefs are not allowed to use any of their old methods, the people formerly subject to them often refuse to obey or to take any notice of their directions. The tendency is for the old large communities to be broken up: for the small man to collect a surrounding of friends and go off and build new hamlets in other localities. There are very few chiefs in British Central Africa who are of great assistance to the Magistrate so far as judicial work goes. There are, of course, notable exceptions, but as a rule it is not safe to give any power to native headmen."[2] I feel that the view of chieftainship expressed in this report is erroneous and that the chief was never as powerful over all his subjects as the 1903 administration assumed. Also the break-up of large communities,

643 I feel, was not due to a break-up of the chief's
175 power but rather to a breakdown of domestic
648 slavery and the system of sanctions that lay behind it, thereby freeing slaves who started setting up their own homesteads. It illustrates that the social system was fundamentally disturbed by the changes wrought by British domination as early as 1903.

643 This process continued until the Administration
622 saw fit in 1912 to introduce legislation to prevent
175 further splitting up of communities and to give a certain amount of power to "paid native local
648 authorities . . . who shall be responsible to the District Residents for the good order and administration of their villages or areas." [3] Hence with the passing of the District Administration (Natives) Ordinance 1912, the Administration began to recognize the indigenous political functionaries and to absorb them into the general political machinery of the Territory. In this Ordinance, village headmen were recognized as possessing a certain amount of power over the people who lived in their villages. Amongst the village headmen one was to be recognized as a Principal Village Headman. The Ordinance made it clear that the position of the Principal Village Headman was in no way to be regarded as similar to the old tribal position of chief. Though the Ordinance further warned that persons who were formerly chiefs were not necessarily to be appointed Principal Headmen, it should be noted that many Principal Headmen were in fact such people. Thus, in 1912, the leadership position of certain headmen in the Territory, though always recognized by the Africans themselves before that date, was further officially recognized and they were given specific powers by the British. "Residents were to indicate carefully by their attitude towards, and dealings with, Principal Headmen the fact that they were officially recognized as chiefs in their respective sections and that, as such, they were entitled to the respect and obedience of their people." [4] Nevertheless it was planned to have a structure

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[1] Recorded in the District Book at the District Commissioner's Office in Zambia.
[2] Annual Report of the Territory 1903-4 quoted in E. S. Monnay, *Handbook of Nyasaland*, (London: 1932), p. 128. [3] E. S. Monnay (1932). [4] E. S. Monnay (1932), p. 130.

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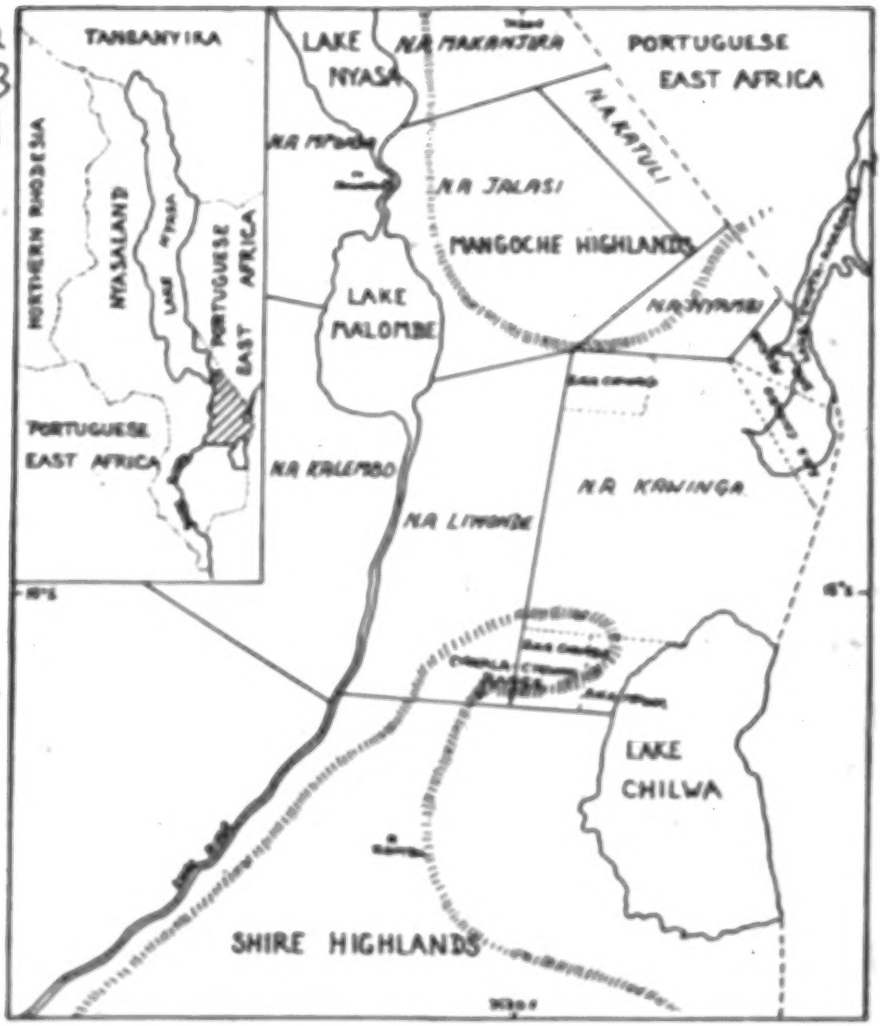

MAP TO SHOW APPROXIMATE POSITION OF CHIEFS

This map is diagrammatic. In other words it shows the relative position of the chiefs and does not pretend to represent the boundaries faithfully.

643 622 175 648 in which the District Commissioner would be the real authority with the Principal Headmen as his subordinates, to carry out certain well-defined duties under his instructions. The Principal Headmen were expected to assist in the concentration of the huts in accordance with the new regulations concerning village headmen and the villages they controlled. Measures for the sanitation in the villages, sweeping and cleaning of villages, the construction of refuse-pits and latrines, were included in the Ordinance and the responsibility for this devolved upon the headmen. Village headmen were also expected to report crimes, abnormal illnesses and deaths, and so on. A clause specifically stated that no power to hear

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P.149B]

IV. THE PRESENT POSITION

643 175 648 131 In order to illustrate the structure of the political divisions with which we are dealing, I shall outline the make-up of the three districts under the Native Authorities Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi (see accompanying map).

It will be recalled that Kawinga and Liwonde trace their descent from a single ancestress three generations back from the present Kawinga and five generations back from the present Liwonde. The groups under the leadership of these two brothers Liwonde I and Kawinga I, entered Nyasaland in the early part of the nineteenth century and after various campaigns in Mount Mangoche area migrated across the Shire River at Mvera and took up their position on Kungwa hill. Here the second Kawinga died. Shortly after this the groups were displaced by Ngoni raids and they recrossed the Shire River and moved southwards to displace another Yao chief, Malemia, from Mount Cikala (near Zomba), which stronghold Kawinga held until they were displaced by the British attacks in 1895. Liwonde at first occupied the neighbouring range Caoni but soon moved down to the Shire River. He too was displaced by British attacks and fled with Ka-

[TEXT CONTINUES MIDDLE OF P.149B]

643 and determine petty native cases was conferred upon the headmen, though the District Commis-
622 sioner was supposed to seek their advice when
175 necessary.
648 Therefore, from the time of conquest a pattern of superordination of the Whites and subordination of the Africans was established and the indigenous political system remained largely without official recognition until the Native Authorities Ordinance was passed in 1933. The major change wrought by this Ordinance was that Native Courts were planned and instituted by the Native Courts Ordinance of the same year. At the same time a Native Treasury was founded.

IV. The Present POSITION

643 wings to Portuguese East Africa. They were
175 allowed to return later and they took up their
648 positions in an area roughly outlined in the early
131 part of this paper. At the same time, owing to military action by the Portuguese a certain number of refugees were crossing the border into the Lake Ciuta area of Nyasaland.

TABLE I

Demographic Composition of Political Areas[1]

Sub. Area	*Tot. Pop.*	*Admin. Vills.*	*Av. Pop. of Admin. Vills.*	*Tribal Composition*			
				Yao	Nguru	Nyanja	Ngoni
				%	%	%	%
N.A. Kawinga (Yao)	23,087	311	74	51	37	10	2
S.N.A. Cambu (Yao)	5,119	61	84	72	20	7	1
S.N.A. Mpona (Yao)	4,411	60	74	49	19	32	—
S.N.A. Chiwalo (Yao)	2,202	19	116	80	15	5	—
S.N.A. Ngokwe (Mpotola)	2,868	21	136	16	43	40	1
S.N.A. Chikwawa (Mpotola)	7,102	49	145	28	56	16	—
N.A. Liwonde (Yao)*	12,716	106	120	75	20	5	—
N.A. Nyambi (Yao)*	7,335	63*	116	73	27	—	—

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631
[563]

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[P. 149 C]

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[1] Abstracted from crude returns of 1945 census. District Commissioner's Offices at Zomba and Fort Johnston.
[2] Census data for a newly created S.N.A., Shire, not recorded separately.
Approximation only. Number of Administrative villages not ascertained.
[3] N.A.—Native Authority; S.N.A.—Subordinate Native Authority.

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631

	Total Pop.	Area sq. m.	Density per sq. m.
Kawinga	44,789	682	65·5
Liwonde	12,716	396	32·0
Nyambi	7,335	140	52·5

The Table I summarizes the present demographic position in the areas. The greater part of the area under study is divided between the Native Authorities Kawinga and Liwonde who call each other "brother". Kawinga as well as being a Native Authority with jurisdiction over five subordinate native authorities, is a chief over a certain number of villages in the same way as his subordinate native authorities are. These subordinate native authorities under Kawinga are:

631 1. *S.N.A. Cauma*, who is a matrilineal descendant of the first Kawinga's son and who still calls the present Kawinga "father", is in charge of an area along the south side of Mount Cikala;

2. *S.N.A. Mpasa* is a matrilineal descendant of the son of the first Liwonde and therefore calls both Kawinga and Liwonde "father" (*atati*). His area lies near Lake Chilwa and contains a high proportion of the original Nyanja peoples of the area;

3. *S.N.A. Ciwalo's* area adjoins that of N. A. Nyambi at the north of Kawinga's sub-district. Ciwalo was a sister's son to one of the previous Kawinga's and his mother's brother had succeeded, illegally in the opinion of some, to the name of Kawinga V (see p. 147). Ciwalo succeeded to his mother's brother's name that he had before he took the name of Kawinga V. The present Kawinga VI who was known as Mboga before he succeeded must call Ciwalo "my elder brother" (*akulumunga*);

4. *S.N.A. Ngokwe* and 5. *S.N.A. Cikuwo* are, as the Table shows, not Yao but Mpotola who are a people from Portuguese East Africa. The Mpotola have lost whatever language they had in the past and now speak Yao and as far as I could see follow Yao usage and custom. The areas under the jurisdiction of these S.N.A's lie along the north-east boundary of Kawinga's area adjoining the Portuguese territory. The Table also shows

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[P.150B]

631 that there is a relatively low proportion of Yao in the area whereas the Nguru are well represented. The term Nguru is applied by the Yao to any person from a certain part of Portuguese East Africa. It is indiscriminately applied to a number of tribes, though mostly to the Lomwe who form a congeries of related tribes.

Liwonde sub-district lies to the west of that of Kawinga and it has as its western boundary the Shire River. There is one S.N.A. in the area, Stora, appointed in 1940, but I could not visit him and there is no census information on this group. This new S.N.A. is a sister's son to the present Liwonde and actually stands in the direct line of succession to the name of Liwonde.

Nyambi sub-district is now a part of Fort Johnston District. It lies to the north of Kawinga's area and is small. The relationship of Nyambi to Liwonde and Kawinga has been noted above (p. 147). At the same time it was noted that Nyambi calls Jalasi "my child" (mwanangu). Jalasi, who had been a powerful leader, was recognized by the Administration as a superior chief in the area. The Nyambi who was living at the time resented the activities of a person who was genealogically inferior to him and therefore moved from the area he occupied then, to the present position which was under Kawinga at the time (about 1914). When the Native Authorities Ordinance was introduced Nyambi was made an N.A. independently of Kawinga. Recently (1947) the subdistrict under his jurisdiction was transferred from Zomba District Administration to Fort Johnston, largely at the request of the present Nyambi who said that he preferred to be with his own relatives (Jalasi's family).

563 The Table I shows that in some areas there is a considerable proportion of non-Yao under Yao chiefs. The reason for this is that the Yao came into these areas as conquerors, either eliminating the indigenous Nyanja or allowing them to remain there in a subordinate position. Later, from the turn of the century until about 1930, there was a gradual infiltration of Nguru peoples into Nyasaland from Portuguese East Africa. The presence of the different tribal

563 groups presents a problem to be considered but for the main purposes of this paper a brief comment is sufficient.

The Nyanja people who were allowed to remain in the areas, continued to live in their village communities in much the same way as the Yao did. In fact the Nyanja and the Nguru are so similar in culture to the Yao, that it was possible for them to fit into the Yao social structure fairly easily. For example, in Mposa's area Mbande and Mbeta are recognized by the local Yao sub-chief as important personages since they were the indigenous chiefs in the area before the Yao came [554] in as invaders. Both, for example, have adopted the Yao practice of wearing a red band round the head to indicate rank. Both have the right to conduct the Yao indigenous initiation ceremonies. At one meeting I attended Mbande was allowed [554] to sit in a chair while the only other person to do so was Mposa himself. This is a mark of honour since no commoner is allowed to sit in a chair in the presence of the chief.

In the same way the Nguru immigrants have come in small groups of matrilineal kin and have settled either in hamlets alone or set up small hamlets in close vicinity to kinsmen. Their headmen in turn have been absorbed into the general political structure though they have their own language and distinguishing cultural traits. Thus some Nguru initiate their boys according to their own *cidototo*, though others will allow their boys

[Text continues top of P.151B]

V. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

642 177 The accompanying diagram is designed to summarize the main types of interaction that take place in the political structure of the three areas. Interaction between the social personalities in the political structure can be said to take place in reference to certain sets of values. One set of values is that which the Yao recognize and believe to belong to the White people. Another set of values they recognize and subscribe to as their own. A chief may interact with a village headman because he has broken a regulation which

[Text continues bottom of P.151B]

563 to be initiated according to the Yao custom (*lupanda*). In general, the Nguru headmen are village headmen in the same way as the Yao are and they follow the same pattern in political behaviour.

563 621 At the moment, throughout the areas, the various tribal groups live in kinship clusters so that under one Yao administrative headman there may be two or three unrelated Yao kin-groups and possibly one or two Nguru groups living quite separately. Though the population in the area as a whole is mixed, usually the village groups are tribally homogeneous. So far little inter-marriage has taken place. I shall not here analyse this situation, though it is politically pregnant. In many ways the Nguru immigrants [771] are more progressive than the Yao. Most Yao in this area are professed Moslems and do not attend the local schools which are Christian. However, the missions have been more successful among the Nguru and they are becoming more educated and advanced. A good proportion of the Government posts in the area is filled by Nguru for this reason. This is most significant in the context of the general situation as will become apparent in the description below. For the rest of the paper I shall consider the political structure as I see it, in terms of the social personalities in the structure, and the presence of these non-Yao groups is implicit in the rest of this analysis.

V. The Political STRUCTURE

648 642 177 the Administration has persuaded the chief to pass and the full significance of which lies in a system of European values. These systems of values are foreign to each other in many features. Opposition between the two groups, White and Black, must arise if their behaviour is affected by different sets of values. The Yao, for example, believe that most deaths are caused by sorcery and claim the right to take punitive measures against the sorcerers. The Whites do not believe in this and prevent punitive action against people

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[P.152]

DIAGRAM

SUMMARY OF POLITICAL INTERACTION IN YAO AREAS

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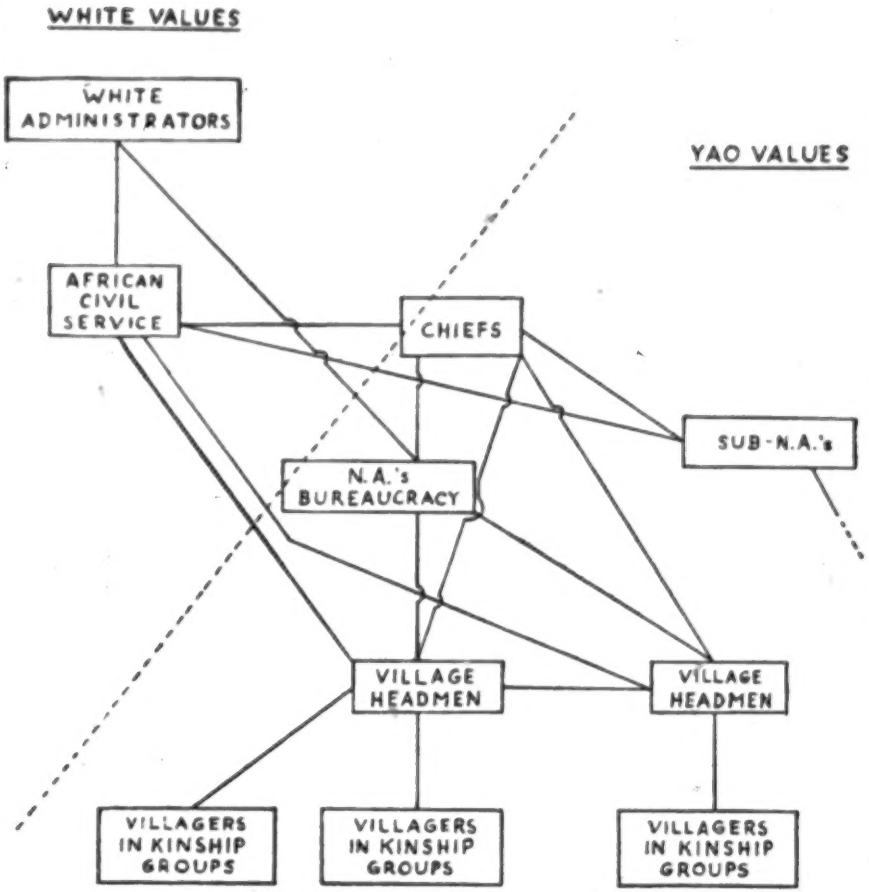

(Only the main lines of interaction are included in this diagram.)

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177 who are, to them, innocent. The diagram has been divided obliquely to represent these two systems or fields of values. The division of the diagram into two parts depicts a major rift in local political relationships. While some political relationships, as say between village headmen, do not directly manifest this cleavage, in most, as say the chief with his subjects, though the Whites are not present in person, they are there in the context of the interaction. This will become evident as the analysis proceeds, but at this point it is sufficient to observe that the Whites and the White system of values are an integral part of the modern Yao political organization.

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648 In addition to this, there is a hierarchy of status roughly conforming to the placing of the social personalities in the diagram, i.e., the White Administrator is of higher status than the African Civil Service which is roughly on the same level as the chiefs, but both are on a higher status than the Native Authority's clerk and officials are. The lines represent the main direction of interaction.

648
563 1. *The White Administrator and the African Civil Service*

By the White Administrator I mean the District Commissioners, Agricultural Officers and other Government officials who come into contact with the African populations, particularly in the rural areas. The social distance between a White person in general and the Africans is much larger than that between, say, an African chief and his meanest subject. Social interaction on an intimate basis cannot take place between chief and Administrator mainly because their relationship is dominated by the pattern of all South African territories, where White does not interact intimately with Black. I have already stated that not many Europeans come into the area. Those Whites that do come into the area are immediately accorded the status of an Administrative Officer and are apt to be thought of as such, though they may not be so. The Yao clearly recognizes that the Labour Recruiter is a different sort of person from the Missionary and both differ from District Commissioners, but

648 563 nevertheless the type of behaviour which is normal between Labour Recruiter and African is dictated by the pattern of behaviour of African to Administrator. The Yao find it extremely difficult to separate out their attitudes to these different types of social personalities and the main reason is that they tend to categorize all White people into a general class "Whites" of whom the most common representative to them is the Administrator.

647 648 It is, however, impossible to consider the Administrator without reference to the African Civil Service. I am using this phrase to mean those Africans who are in constant and direct interaction with the Administrator. I include the clerks, interpreters, messengers, policemen, and other intermediaries between the Administrator himself and the people. Probably of major importance is the interpreter who speaks directly to the people on behalf of the Administrator. In Southern Nyasaland the official language is Nyanja and officials are expected to learn it for their official business. Some of the Yao men [191] in the area under study can understand and speak Nyanja but some men cannot and certainly most women cannot do so. Therefore, the tendency is for the Administrators to make use of interpreters in dealings with the Yao and other peoples in the area. The Administrators do not interact directly with various social personalities but do so rather through either their own civil service or through the N.A.'s Bureaucracy who, being educated, are able to speak and understand the official language. The Administrators are in direct interaction with their own Civil Service and only in indirect interaction with the other social personalities in the political structure.

The African Civil Service stands for a set of White values and for this reason is placed in the "Whites Values" part of the diagram. The African Civil servant represents the District Commissioner or Agricultural Officer to the tribesman. The Tax Clerk, while he is collecting taxes, is part of the system of the Administrator. The Agricultural Capitao (African official) represents the Agricultural Officer to the villager when he instructs him in the building of contour ridges.

[See p.152 — Analyst.]

647 Therefore the African Civil Service has behind
648 it the very powerful set of sanctions of the Administration, both legal and eventually military, so that it is possible for a young Agricultural Demonstrator to resist a chief and be impertinent to him. The Demonstrator acting thus knows that he has the force of the White Administration behind him. He knows that he is able to report to the Agricultural Officer if the chief refuses to carry out instructions. The African Civil Service too, are outside the reach of the chief's power of punishment save where sanctioned by law. It was possible for a certain clerk of the District Commissioner while on tour, to sleep with the divorced wife of the chief—a thing which no villager would have dared to do for fear of the wrath of the chief. The African Civil Service is also the correct channel of approach to an Administrator. Should a villager wish to see the District Commissioner he must first approach the messengers and interpreters before they are taken to the District Commissioner. The strong position of the African Civil Service in the situation is quite obvious.

648 The Administrator, through the mediation of his African Civil Service, interacts with the chief, the village headman, and the villager in different situations. Probably in all, the greater part of the Administrator's rule of tribal Africans is spent in interaction with the chief. This interaction is occasioned by their respective positions in the political structure. The Administrator may discuss with the chief such things as the Treasury, the general food situation, the court cases, some unsatisfactory feature of the chief's administration. The Administrator may interact with village headmen in the same sort of way over specific points of common interest. The Agricultural Officer may reprove the village headman for the existence of some mound-gardens in some of the village gardens, the District Commissioner upbraid him on the general state of disrepair in the village. Finally, the villager may approach the

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949
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648 District Commissioner on specific points. These points refer to some particular work of the Administration of which the District Commissioner is a representative. A villager may make enquiries about army gratuities, about tax exemption, about the administration of estates of relatives who have died in Southern Rhodesia, etc. In general we may say that the interaction between the people on one hand and the Administration on the other takes place largely in terms of an overlapping field of interest, which the tribesmen see as a part of the White system of values but to which they do not fully subscribe.

2. *The Chiefs and their Bureaucracies*

643 645 648 The chiefs and their bureaucracies stand in a peculiar position in the political structure. They are, as it were, the bridge between the indigenous political machinery activated by a system of indigenous values, subscribed to by chief and commoner alike, and the White Administration on the other hand. To the people, the chief and his bureaucracy represent the White Administration to them since it is through this set of institutions that the regulations are administered. The N.A.'s bureaucracy collects the poll taxes,[1] dogs, guns, canoes, etc., supervises the construction of latrines, etc., and the chief punishes the people for breaches of regulations (not tax defaulters) which to the tribesmen are part of the White Administration. At the same time the chief is their representative to the District Commissioner and when the District Commissioner speaks to the chief he is in effect speaking to the people. From the point of view of the Administration he is in exactly the same interjacent position: he is both their representative to the people and the people's representative to the Administration. Accordingly the oblique line in the diagram passes through the rectangles marked 'chief' and N.A.'s Bureaucracy'.

The chief has lost many of the attributes of status that he had in the early days. No longer

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[P.154C]

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[1] Actually the poll taxes are collected by a Tax clerk who is stationed at the N. A. court-house but is remunerated from the Central Treasury. He is therefore really a member of the African Civil Service but since he lives at the chief's court and interacts with the chief, is looked upon by the villagers as part of the N.A.'s bureaucracy, I include him in this paper as part of the chief's staff.

643 does he monopolize the trade to the coast. To-
645 day the goods are brought in by Indian traders
and are bought for cash by the African tobacco
648 growers and the returned labour migrants.
He can no longer use his slaves to increase his
wealth by capturing yet other slaves. Nowadays
his salary is insufficient for his own requirements
and he can no longer make the gifts that he used
to, to the village headmen and councillors.
Councillors (i.e. the *akuna* not necessarily offi-
cially recognized by the Administration) complain
that though they are not paid they nevertheless
have to do much of the work that the District
Commissioner expects the chief to do. The
chief himself is generally too poor to pay them
though some do in fact privately remunerate
certain of their unrecognized councillors. The
643 chief is still expected to give a burial cloth
when an important headman dies, and to make
648 a gift to a headman when he succeeds to a name,
651 but his tribute of food and ivory has ceased.
The people look upon the taxes they pay to the
Administration and the licences that are paid
to the chief's court as substitute for the chief's
tribute. One informant explained that no longer
is it necessary to send a pot of beer to the chief
when beer is brewed, because nowadays a sixpenny
licence must be taken out from the court for each
brew for sale. He looked upon the licence (de-
signed by the Administration as a measure to
counter excessive brewing and paid into the Native
Treasury and not to the chief) as a modern sub-
stitute.

643 Nevertheless, it appears that the chiefs do
manage to live at a higher standard than most
of their subjects. They usually appear to be dressed
more finely and seem to have larger wardrobes.
Most have brick dwelling houses and rather more
furniture than the average commoner. Nearly
all have shot-guns and some have rifles. This
is largely possible because the salaries are regularly
paid even if they are low, and because many of
the former obligations have fallen away. No longer
do the chiefs entertain on so lavish a scale.

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[P.155 B] PT7 Yao PT7

643 The chiefs are also able more successfully to press their claims to certain gifts from visiting Europeans, particularly in articles which are difficult for Africans to obtain—for example, cartridges. One chief uses his rifle to shoot game and the meat is peddled round the villages by one of his servants. Some are also able to make use of the services of remand prisoners and other villagers in their gardens, thus growing more food and sometimes more of cash crops as tobacco. Other chiefs are able to use their salaries as capital and employ labourers to cultivate tobacco and other cash crops. A few returned labour migrants make small gift payments to the chief.

643 692 The main duty of the chief is the arbitration in disputes. The Native Courts Ordinance established two classes of native courts, called respectively A and B courts, which differ in their powers. Under the same Ordinance court assessors who are remunerated from Native Treasury funds, were appointed.

693 647 The Native Authority's bureaucracy is made up of a large assortment of functionaries and officials, including in the largest court, (Kawinga's), 6 court assessors, 1 court clerk, 1 assistant court clerk, 1 community worker, 1 forest guard, 1 agricultural demonstrator, 1 sanitary inspector, 9 court messengers, 2 caretakers, 4 garetta men, [1] 1 market clerk, 1 market sweeper. Other Native Authorities also have well inspectors. These people are remunerated from the Native Treasury and the most highly paid is usually the court clerk. I do not intend to deal in detail with the duties of each but I shall deal with the more important of them and make some general remarks about their position in the structure.

693 645 The court assessors are supposed to assist in arbitrating cases. Under the old system there were both councillors, *nduna*, and court assessors, *mapungu*, (see p. 144). There is not sufficient provision for the remuneration of both councillors and court assessors in the modern system and there has been a general alteration in their functions. Some of the old councillors are no longer

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[P.155C]

647
493 ' A "gareta" was a one-wheeled conveyance in which an Administrator or chief was wheeled around while on tours. Nowadays garetas are hardly ever used and the men who used to be employed to push them are used mainly as messengers.

693 paid by the chief but still advise him, and retain
645 much of the prestige due to their rank, which is inherited. Others have been incorporated as court assessors though they may not actually take part in the duties. Some now combine both sets of duties and function both as councillors and court assessors. Some of the duties of both sets of officials, however, have been taken over by the court clerk and other court functionaries. Although the position of court assessor was part of the old tribal structure, modern court assessors see themselves as occupying a position in a structure largely of White fashioning. I once heard a court assessor when conducting an enquiry into a case of adultery, cut short the prolixity of a witness saying: "None of these long stories. We are conducting this case according to the custom of the Whites."

More illuminating still is the position that the court clerks occupy in the modern structure. [212] They are differentiated from the vast majority of the population because they are literate. All of them have been educated, usually in a mission [563] school. A high proportion of them are Nguru because more Nguru are Christian (hence educated) than Yao (see p. 151). Because he can read and write, the chief court clerk is the medium through which the chief expresses himself in writing and the medium through which he gets written information from the Administrators and others. The court clerk is therefore in a unique position of knowing all the business that comes into the chief's hand by letter. He, of course, must also write the replies so that he has a very good knowledge of what is going on in the territory. In addition, because of his education and knowledge of the ways of the White people the court clerk often makes a better councillor than the uneducated and naive traditional councillor does. Therefore in certain matters the court clerk, rather than the councillor, is the chief's most important adviser.

693 The various other officials have different
647 functions to perform, frequently of a semi-technical nature. There are sanitary inspectors, well inspectors, etc. The court sergeant who is present at the cases now performs many of the

693
647 duties which the court assessor used to in past days. The correct channel of approach to the chief now is through the court sergeant.

In most situations where the chief's orders are to be carried out, the various members of his bureaucracy execute them. For example, when the chief wants some duty to be performed by the villagers, it is the court sergeant or messenger who sees to it. The messengers carry out the instructions and wishes of the chief to all parts of his territory. To the villagers, therefore, the N.A.'s bureaucracy represent the chief when acting as his agent but they also represent the White Administration because much of their interaction with the villagers is in terms of some regulations based upon White values. The court clerk who apprehends a villager and charges him with being in possession of an unlicensed dog is acting, in the eyes of the villager, not so much as an agent of the chief, but rather as an agent of the chief representing the Administration. The sanitary inspector may explain to the man who has been charged with having no latrine, "It is the law that you should have one", and by this he means the White law.

3. *The Position of the Subordinate Native Authorities*

643 I have not yet considered the position of the
648 S.N.A.'s in the structure. In the diagram they are represented as a separate interactional system. The reason why they have been represented thus, is because the S.N.A.'s regard themselves as autonomous units and in no way an integral part of the main interactional system under a chief. Each S.N.A. has his own sub-court and a small bureaucracy of his own. He sets up a replica of the situation under the chief. Each S.N.A. has the insignia of rank that the chief has: he is given the same greeting; wears the red band around his head; holds initiation ceremonies, etc. Each S.N.A. has the duty of making a sacrifice to the ancestors before and after the rains. A recent theft of a sacrificial cloth hung on a tree-shrine in a S.N.A.'s area was held to endanger the rainfall in that area alone. The chief in the area makes use of his position in the structure in relation to the Administration to bring pressure

3 [See p. 152 — Analyst.]

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643 to bear on his sub-chiefs. For example, when
648 one sub-chief mishandled a prisoner, the chief did not feel himself to be in a position to reprimand the sub-chief. He reported the matter to the District Commissioner. Another had expressed displeasure at the conviviality of the sub-chief with an Nguru man. He had given instructions that the one Nguru with whom the sub-chief was on intimate terms, should be beaten if found together with the sub-chief again. The sub-chief merely countermanded the ruling and nothing further was done about it. When one of the chiefs was to be given a medal by the Governor it was only with great difficulty that the sub-chiefs could be induced to attend the ceremony. One of the sub-chiefs said: "Why should my feet get sore walking to his capital? He's getting the medal, not me". The Native Authority of his own account has not sufficient authority to reprimand a S.N.A. and where this must be done he must call in the District Commissioner to do it.

4. *The Village Headmen and the Villagers*

622 A District Commissioner once referred to the village headman as "the lance-corporal of the political system—doing all the work and getting all the kicks". This description is an illuminating one. The population in the area is distributed in hamlets of mainly matrilineal kinsmen usually composed of a man and his female matrilineal relatives and spouses (see p. 142). The male leader of this group I call a village headman but this should not be confused with the social personality here called the Administrative village headman. For purposes of the Administration, villages and hamlets are grouped under officially recognised and remunerated village headmen. Administrative village headmen usually have some local standing. Some have the right to wear the red band which distinguishes rank, some have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies for both boys and girls, they are all given the greeting correct for people of some rank, they are referred to by a term which signifies both the chief and the village headman (**mwene**).

The administrative village headman has certain duties which he must perform in respect of his

622 Administrative village. The N.A.'s bureaucracy considers him responsible for the collection of the taxes though, of course, the legal responsibility rests on the tax-payer. The village headman is generally responsible for the various regulations that the villagers must carry out. In practice the Administrative village headman may be in charge of a single kin-group and thus have a certain amount of control over the villagers because of his kinship with them. More frequently, however, the Administrative village headman is also in charge of a number of other hamlets, sometimes completely unrelated to him but who happen to have been assigned to his jurisdiction. He then delegates the responsibilities to the headmen in charge of the hamlets.

622 554 The Yao judge rank among the village headmen largely in terms of historical antecedents and by the number of dependants that a village headman has. While a certain village headman may be ranked fairly highly in the status system because his ancestors were closely associated with the ancestors of the chief, he may not now have many villagers around him. A newcomer to the area however, can only become notable by acquiring sufficient followers to make him a man of considerable power. Associated with rank are the various insignia that I have mentioned, i.e. the right to hold initiation ceremonies, the right to wear a red band round the head, etc. The competition among village headmen therefore, is phrased largely in terms of competition for these particular insignia of rank. They strive to be recognized as Administrative village headmen—"to have a book" as they say, since this at once means that they will receive a remuneration for work which they would have to do anyway, and it also means that they would be recognized as village headmen in the eyes of the White Administration. Village headmen also compete with each other to have the right to hold initiation ceremonies and use the threat to move out of the chief's area to bring pressure to bear on him to force him to grant the right.

692 While domestic quarrels are usually settled by the kin-group leaders and by the husband's and wife's parties conferring together, differences out-

682 side the kin-group are usually settled by the arbitration of a local village headman or the chief. What decides whether a case is tried by a village headman or a chief seems to depend largely on the seriousness of the case and hence the amount of compensation that it involves. A quarrel between a village headman and his heir for example was settled by a local village headman, the compensation in this case being a matter of 2/- and a pot of beer. More serious cases are taken to the chief for arbitration and whether the cases are then tried in the court or not depends on the type of case. Certain cases are known to conflict with the system of values of the Whites. They are tried by the same court assessors and arbitrated in by the same chief who presids in the context of the Native Courts Ordinance, but they are handled by an entirely different procedure. Thus, a case involving the accusation of sorcery or the breach of a taboo leading to death and compensation claims is arbitrated on by the chief acting in terms of the indigenous value system. These cases take place outside the court-house, usually at the chief's hut, and are not recorded as a court case at all. The chief awards compensation in the same way but it is not recorded as in ordinary court cases.

Cases which are known not to conflict with White values are tried in the court-house if compensation of some value is involved. If we exclude from consideration the cases following a breach of the N.A.'s regulations we find that the recorded court cases are almost entirely about compensation for adultery, petty theft and assaults. Here the chief and court assessor function as social personalities acting in reference to a set

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P.158B]

VI. GENERAL SUMMARY

642 177 I have tried to describe the political structure of the Yao in Liwonde, Kawinga and Nyumbi sub-areas in terms of the interaction of social personalities in a structure briefly summarised in the diagram. The aspect of the social personality perceivable in set situations of social interaction

[TEXT CONTINUES BOTTOM OF P.158B]

692 of White values which coincide with their own.
692 Informants say that the position of the village
643 headman in contrast with that of the chief is
622 getting progressively weaker. They maintain that cases once tried by the village headman are now taken to the chief's court. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain. The fact that there is some sanction on the guilty party to settle the compensation if he is tried in the chief's court, probably pays a part. The compensation awarded is recorded in the Court Case book and the chief is empowered to keep a man under remand until it is paid. The chief sometimes supports the village headman against recalcitrant subjects. A man once refused to pay a compensation awarded against him by a village headman. The village headman referred the case to the chief who said to the man: "As you have disobeyed the order of the village headman it means that you have insulted me, the District Commissioner and the Governor". But in general there is a tendency for the central authority to be strengthened and the chief emphasizes his relationships to the White Administration in order to consolidate his position of dominance over his headmen. At a succession ceremony of a village headman the chief who had supported an unpopular candidate said: "This man has been chosen by me and the Governor agrees with me". Clearly in this insecure situation the chief saw himself against his subjects, and as part of the White Administration. He uses his power in this political situation to establish a dominance over the headmen, that he could never have established before the White men came (see p. 144).

VI. General
SUMMARY

642 depends on the field of values in which the inter-
177 action is taking place. To illustrate this with a simple example, when the court messenger exacted a levy of 1*d.* from each garden-owner in the area where the sacrificial cloth had been stolen from the tree-shrine, they saw in him a

642 177 representative of the chief, acting as he was in terms of a system of values indigenous to the Yao. If during the same trip he informed the villagers that the village roads should be cleaned, to the people he would appear as a representative of the chief who is representative of the Administrator and is acting according to a value held by the Whites and embodied in a regulation governing the cleaning of village roads. Two sets of values intermingle in daily life and social personalities are seen first in this guise and then in that depending on the particular interactional situation. Thus the chief, when he is addressing villagers and village headmen, sees himself opposed to them and shows himself to the people as a representative of the White system of values and emphasizes his bonds with the District Commissioner and the Governor. Talking to the Agricultural Officer he sees himself opposed to the White system of values and opposes contour ridging, saying that unlike the traditional system of agriculture it encourages white ants in the gardens.

642 186 At the same time the White value system, symbolized to the Africans mainly by the Administration, is becoming an integrating force in their life. The otherness of the White system of values emphasizes the unity of their own. Formerly hostile, chiefs are now living at peace under the

B:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949
[P.159 B] FT7 Yao FT7

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Administration. Africans are becoming increasingly aware of their position in the British Empire and in the world in general. The trips of labour migrants to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia have emphasized this since Yao from formerly hostile groups, Nguru and Nyanja alike, were all classified as "Nyasa boys" and in the situation of being amongst vastly different tribes at these labour centres they have begun to see themselves as a united people. Also during the war there was a high recruitment rate in Nyasaland and since the 1st and 2nd KAR are recruited from Nyasaland, this heightened the feeling of belonging to a new political entity—Nyasaland. The new feeling of unity of Nyasaland people is felt most strongly by the younger people who have been out to work and who have been in the army. This feeling is also strong among the more educated who now read African newspapers from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa in which columns are set aside for "Nyasaland News". Symptomatic of this is the development of associations of a semi-political nature especially among the more educated people—the clerks and the teachers—organizations which cut right across the old tribal barriers, and which are serving to integrate the whole of the African population into a united political body.

8:Mitchell E-5 (1946-1947) 1949
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